

TRANSFORMATION OF FASCISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: A COMPREHENSIVE THEORY

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April 19, 2013

First posted on <http://imperialismandthethirdworld.wordpress.com>

Abstract

This paper analyzes and discusses the historical continuities and discontinuities of various forms of fascism in the imperialist centers and their Third World peripheries. It also proposes that fascism is an inherent part of the advanced capitalist democracy and imperialism and discusses its historical externalizations to the Third World periphery, as well as the dialectical interactions between the center and periphery, in this regard, in which it is now in the process of returning to the centers.

A note on the background of this paper

This paper was presented at the Pacific Northwest Marxist Scholars Conference in Seattle, Washington, on April 11, 1986, under a different title, "Some Aspects of the Developing Dialectic of U. S. Capitalist Democracy and International Imperialism". It is being reproduced here without any changes, except in the title. The paper was type-written and was scanned and transferred to the MS Word with some difficulty.

As predicted theoretically in the paper, enormous further erosions of capitalist democracy and conditions of the working class have taken place in the US and other imperialist centers since its writing and presentation in 1986, which are continuing and are going to get worse. Great changes have also occurred in the world politico-economic situation and balance of forces. Socialism has been betrayed in the former socialist giants, Peoples Republic of China and the USSR, as well as in majority of the other socialist countries. They are now turning into capitalist and imperialist countries, further fuelling and exacerbating the inter-capitalist and inter-imperialist rivalries and competition. The former dominant imperialist countries of the US, Japan, and Europe are now facing powerful and successful competition from the newly emerging capitalist and imperialist or wannabe imperialist powers, especially the countries of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). The 1986 paper had focused on the negative effects of crumbling of the fascist-type dictatorships in the periphery-established and sustained by the center-and their replacement with the democratic types, on the capitalist democracies in the imperialist centers. The great changes in the distribution of world resources, wealth, and balance of power, associated with the emergence of BRICS and other actors on the world stage, will inevitably produce further huge and powerful negative effects on the economies and political superstructures of the rapidly receding imperialist powers that have been dedicated and addicted to dominance and exploitation of the periphery for centuries. The effects, pressures, and forces of these newer changes in the world reality, on the political economies and systems of the imperialist centers, are combining with those of the earlier changes of abolition of fascist-type dictatorships and

multiplying and compounding them. These effects, pressures, and forces are objective, but subjectively, in both cases, the imperialist capital and its political representatives in the government, congress, and other institutions are channeling them through the erosion of capitalist democracy and attacks on the rights, living conditions, employment, and wages of the working class and other working people, in attempts to maintain the class inequalities, privileges, and domination. Large parts of the Third World periphery were subjected to fascism of the imperialist center for a long time. Now those externalized forces and pressures are returning to that center itself. The newer changes mentioned above are also greatly adding to those.

The fundamentals of world balance of economic, political, and military forces, as well as the relations of production and classes, have been changing for quite sometime and recently the pace of these changes has greatly accelerated. The super-profits extracted from the super-exploitation of the Third World had made it possible for the ruling capitalist classes in the US and other imperialist countries to bribe the working classes into class collaboration, from which the latter, especially their leaderships and technically skilled sections, had benefited significantly in financial terms, on the expense of the political positions of the working classes as a whole. Due to the changes in the fundamentals, large parts of the working classes in the imperialist countries are now not only being excluded from the benefits of the bribery, but are also being subjected to greatly enhanced exploitation and exclusion, in order to compensate for losses in the international areas. As the leaderships and privileged sections of the working classes continue to reap the benefits of bribery and class collaboration, they continue the same policies, callously and consciencelessly ignoring and disregarding the plight of large parts of their classes, numbering tens of millions, and on the expense of the political positions of their classes, relative to the capitalist and imperialist classes. Needless to say that continuation of these policies by the working classes of imperialist countries, at this stage of the evolution of their politico-economic and social systems, has now become a great threat to their own welfare-as well as to that of the overwhelming majority of other people-, domestic and international peace, and capitalist democracy itself. These policies are greatly contributing to the blow-back of fascism from the Third World periphery- where it has been replaced with the democratic types-to the imperialist centers, and its establishment there. As a result of its rapidly weakening international economic position and resources, prolonged and irresolvable economic and all-round crises, and becoming the greatest debtor nation in history, US imperialism's ability to bribe its own working class and the capitalist and feudal leaders and other elites of the Third World countries has greatly diminished. In spite of all these great objective changes, it continues to allocate huge parts of its national budget and GDP to military expenditures, spending more on these than all the rest of the world combined. This policy is also now feeding into the developing domestic fascism. All these multiple international and national interacting factors, forces, and pressures, within the context of a new and changed global reality, are producing powerful macro- and micro-level objective and subjective effects, which are eroding the capitalist democracy and transforming it into the most dangerous masked fascism in history. Sooner or later, the mask itself will be eroded, if the system and society continue to move in the same directions.

Overwhelming part of the working class in the US is unorganized. It is in such a dismal state that only 7.2 percent of it is organized into unions in the private sector (2009 figures) and it does not even have its own working class political party. This situation is very different from 1945, when almost 36 percent of American workers were represented by the unions. Its leadership has been complacent with the capitalist class throughout much of the 20th Century, as well as currently. During the last part of 19th Century, first two decades of 20th Century, and during the 1930s, large and important parts of the American working class had become politically conscious and revolutionary. They aimed at wresting political power from the capitalist class, which is the only way for the transformation of the relations of production to bring them into harmony with the level of development of the productive forces and to establish a system of social justice, domestic and international peace, real democracy-the socialist democracy-, and universal well-being for everyone. However, they were brutally repressed and crushed. For example, the Western Federation of Miners (WFM), a militant socialist organization, was crushed between 1903 and 1907 and Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a powerful socialist revolutionary working class organization with large membership, was crushed during the second decade of the 20th Century. Twenty percent of the unions of Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) were controlled by the Communist Party (CP) after the Second World War. It was forced to purge them in 1949 and 1950 due to repressive legislation, government pressure, and American Federation of Labor (AFL) red baiting. AFL has a long history of capitulation to the capitalist class and class collaboration. When the radical unions were being destroyed, AFL was being praised and rewarded. After purging all the communists from their unions, the AFL and CIO merged in 1955. The AFL-CIO has since been engaging in only industrial unionism. The radical unionism of WFM, IWW, and CP controlled unions of CIO was destroyed by brutal repression and repressive legislation. All the other radical political parties and organizations suffered the same fate in the long history of repression in this country. The worst repression was unleashed on CP, shortly after its formation in September 1919 and continued unabated, with brief intervals, with ever-increasing ferocity, until its influence in the working class and unions was almost completely destroyed by 1950s. After the betrayal of socialism in the USSR, the CP has also betrayed socialism under its current leadership. Among other things, it has been attempting to act as Obama's tail! Before the betrayal, CP, under the leadership of Gus Hall, had intellectually become one of the best and most principled communist parties of the world.

Another important change during that period has been in the nature and operations of the United Nations Organization (UNO), its various agencies, and personnel. They no longer conduct the type of important objective and critical studies that were cited in the article. The UNO has essentially become a tentacle of imperialism and its various agencies and officials have lost their former relative intellectual, political, and ethical independence. They have now submitted to the masters that feed them. This is the age of the worst form of prostitution: the intellectual, spiritual, and politico-economic prostitution, and the UNO, like almost everyone else, has also become a part of the chain reaction, mutating into a different element.

Introduction

Much has been written about the nature and history of fascism between the two world wars. However, there is a great void in theory as well as in the objective documentation of the development of fascism after the Second World War. Moreover, in spite of extensive studies of the earlier period, there continues to be very widespread confusion and misunderstanding about the class nature and state structure of the phenomenon of fascism, due to the dominance of bourgeois deformation of social knowledge and psychology in the capitalist societies. Although Marxist-Leninists developed the most scientific analysis of fascism in the earlier period, and several profound communist thinkers and fighters discovered and revealed its most essential features [e.g. R. Palme Dutt (1), Georgi Dimitrov (2), Palmiro Togliatti (3) etc.], no comparable insightful theoretical advance has been made in the development of knowledge of the forms of fascism and their transformations after the Second World War. Two major reasons for this crippling lack have been:

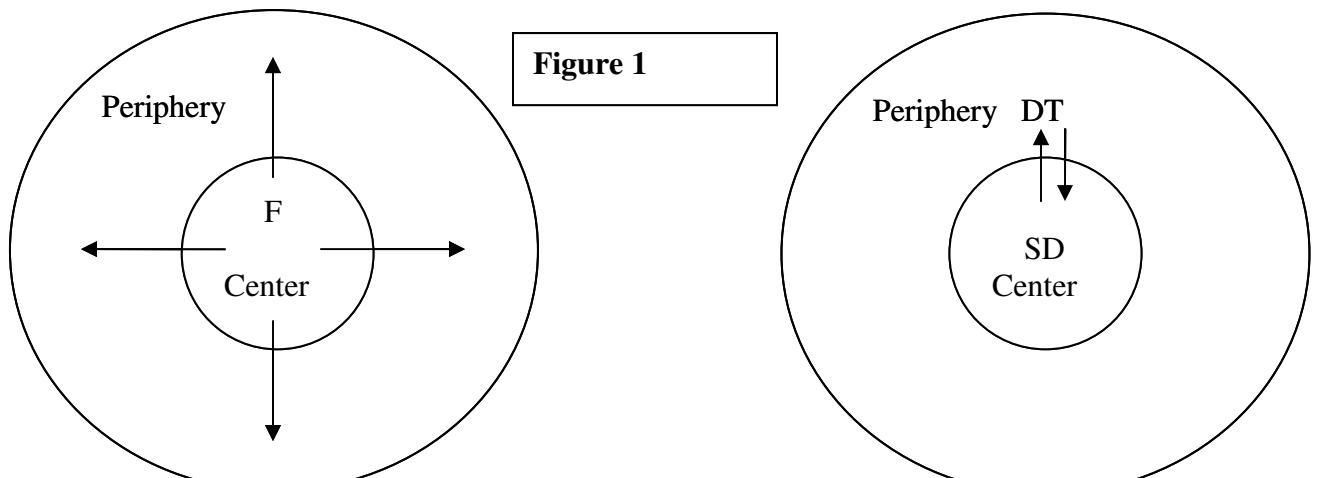
- (1) The entirely inadequate and meager understanding of nature, forms, and evolution of fascist forces and tendencies inherent within the frameworks of bourgeois democracy in the imperialist centers.
- (2) The artificial division and restriction of the phenomenon of fascism within the national boundaries of the center and the periphery in the historical and politico-economic analyses. Superficial appearances that have indicated the overwhelming dominance of bourgeois democracy over forms of fascism inherent in the advanced imperialist center have been generally accepted for their face value. The flow of fascist pressures and tendencies from the center to the periphery has largely gone unnoticed. Such arbitrary and narrow fragmentation of the forms of fascism prevalent in the center from those in numerous areas of the periphery has already done immeasurable damage to the possibility of development of a comprehensive theory and knowledge of fascism as an integrated, interconnected, and continuous whole evolving in the center as well as in the periphery of imperialism simultaneously. In political circles, it is hardly understood at all that the contemporary existence of fascism in large areas of the periphery has been the result of, more than anything else, the evolution, transformation, and externalization of fascist forms and pressures of the imperialist center. Such a gap of understanding has inevitably retarded the discovery of the real and continuing dialectic of bourgeois democracy and fascism and of the passing of one into the other, as well as their mutual conditioning and flow between the center and periphery within the international system of imperialism under contemporary conditions.

In the current international political situation, characterized by intense fascist upsurge in the center as well as sharp polarization of international class forces, it is of utmost importance to grasp the correct structure of the above-mentioned dialectic. This paper is devoted to such an effort.

Evolutionary Dialectic of Fascism: An Outline

The most concise and yet profound and often-quoted definition of the rule of fascism was arrived at during the 13th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in 1933 as “the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital” (4), which continues to be accepted as the essence of fascism by contemporary Marxist-Leninist circles throughout the world. Due to limitations of space, we cannot go into the details of the historical developments of this definition or of why this is the only scientific understanding of the class essence of fascism as compared to the confusionist and obscurantist theories of the apologists of capitalism. Here the focus is on the dialectical developmental processes of fascism.

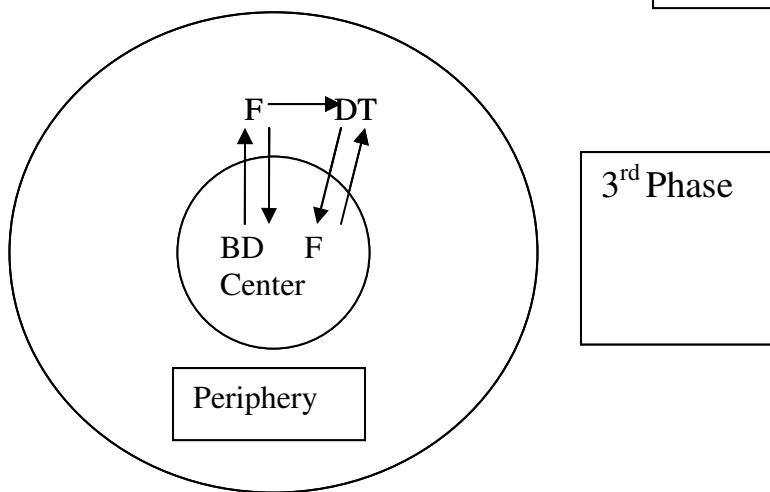
There has been both continuity and discontinuity in the various historical types and forms of fascism. These will be briefly dealt with in the following four phases of fascism and its moltings. The following Figure. 1 is an abstract diagrammatic representation of the theory.



B

4th Phase Alternatives

A



3rd Phase

1st Phase

2nd Phase

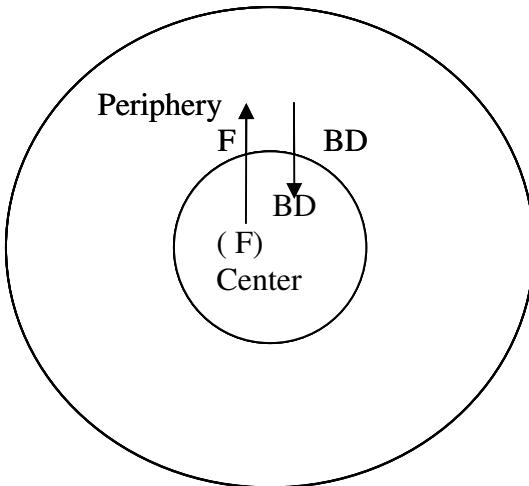
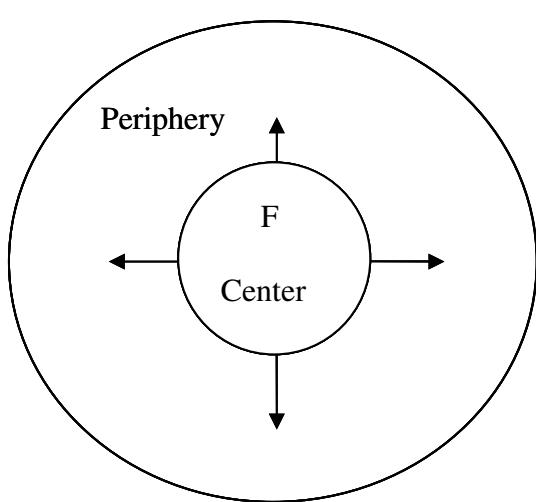


Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of the evolution and transformation of fascism in the twentieth century within the global system of imperialism

1st Phase — Between the two world wars.

Efforts to establish universal fascism.

2nd Phase — After the second World War.

Establishment of dichotomy: bourgeois democracy in the center, fascism in numerous areas of the periphery.

Transitory 3rd Phase — Present.

Breakdown of fascist superstructures in the periphery and their transformation into democratic types. Erosion of bourgeois democracy and upsurge of fascist tendencies in the center.

4th Phase Alternatives — Present to future.

- A. Establishment of socialist democracy in the center and complimentary and reciprocal democratic types in the periphery.
- B. Spontaneous movement of forces and processes within the present imperialist system. Like the first phase, but on a much higher level of force and development.

F = Fascism

BD = Bourgeois Democracy

(F) = Fascist tendencies inherent within bourgeois democracy

DT = Democratic Types

SD = Socialist Democracy

The First Phase

In the first phase, which started in the earlier part of this century and reached its zenith between the two world wars, the bourgeois democratic form of capitalist class rule was replaced by the fascist form of capitalist class rule in certain parts of the imperialist centers, e.g. Germany and Italy. There were colossal efforts to establish the rule of fascism universally. These efforts were crushed after the unprecedented destruction of human lives and material resources.

The Second Phase

The second phase, which started soon after the Second World War and continues into the present, constituted a major shift in the strategy of fascism as well as in the geographical location of its headquarters. As this phase is central to the theory, and as its various

international connections between the imperialist center and the periphery have been effectively obscured for so long, this needs to be elaborated upon in some detail.

The strategy of fascist forces in the imperialist centers after the Second World War changed fundamentally while the basic objectives remained the same, i.e. maximization of profits for the big finance capital, brutal and militarist suppression of the international working class and its unions through fascist-type political superstructures, and economic, political, and military subjugation of the periphery in forms consistent with the new historical conditions. However, in this phase a dichotomy came into existence. While formerly, in the first phase, fascist superstructures were established in some parts of the imperialist centers themselves, in the second phase, the inherent fascist pressures and tendencies of capitalist democracies in the imperialist center were directed towards and channeled into numerous areas of the Third World periphery, while maintaining the bourgeois democratic types of superstructures in the center itself. As a result, numerous fascist-type superstructures sprang up in the periphery during that period. The nature of interactions and mutual conditioning between the imperialist center and periphery in this phase has been the most obscure in modern history. In the diagrammatic representation of this phase, it is shown that, while fascism flowed out of the center into the periphery, bourgeois democracy in the center was reinforced and enhanced by the super-exploitation and imperialist-fascist plunder of the human and natural resources of the periphery and the transfer of the resulting wealth to the center, which made it possible to establish, consolidate, and enhance the bourgeois democratic superstructures in the center. In fact, such a neocolonial process is coextensive with similar mechanisms during the colonial period.

The geographical headquarters of the fascist forces in this period shifted to the U.S. from Germany. It must be pointed out here that fascist tendencies and pressures are inherent in all the imperialist countries and grow out of, as well as against, the bourgeois democratic state apparatus under certain crisis situations. In the U.S., these tendencies and forces were already extremely well-developed and powerful even before the second phase. Fortunately, the inter-imperialist contradictions and rivalries and the uneven developments during the first phase prevented the international simultaneity and coordination of fascist conquest of political power and divided the capitalist world into two opposing camps. In the second phase, the fascist pressures and tendencies inherent within the bourgeois democracy of the imperialist center were externalized onto the numerous areas of the periphery wherever it was possible. The U.S., because of its unparalleled development of an international network of political, economic, and military domination during the post-Second World War period, played the determining central role in the developments of the second phase. As has been scientifically well documented, e.g. in Gromyko's work (5), in the first phase too it was the U.S. monopoly capital that had provided the essential industrial, economic, and military foundations for the establishment of a militarist and fascist Germany in the hope of directing that military power against the U.S.S.R. Although U.S. monopoly capital operates under all forms of political superstructure internationally, the focus of this essay is on its operations under the fascist types. If we examine the foundations of the latter, the following elements stand out clearly as of a determining nature:

- (1) The economic, political, and military structures and forces provided by the imperialist center.
- (2) The native military apparatus dominated by pro-imperialist elites, many of whom are trained for their roles in the center.
- (3) Powerful sections of native big bourgeoisie closely tied to the imperialist metropolitan bourgeoisie.
- (4) Big landowners also closely linked to monopoly capital of the center.

The foundations of fascist-type superstructures in the periphery have been permeated through and through with the powerful and vital components of imperialism, primarily of the U.S. Some sociologists and political economists in the periphery, intimately familiar with the situation, are already arriving at the conclusion that the U.S. metropolitan bourgeoisie can in no realistic sense be considered external to the class structure of fascist-type superstructures under discussion, but on the contrary it constitutes the most dominant class among the various native classes there. This, for example, is the conclusion of veteran progressive Pakistani sociologist Hamza Alavi (6) and various others in their analysis of the fascist-type dictatorships in Pakistan. A more or less similar class situation has existed in numerous other countries of the periphery where fascist-type dictatorships came into being during the second phase. U.S. imperialism has been the connecting thread, the international coordinator and manager of all these dictatorships spread all over the Third World periphery.

At this point, it would be desirable to cite some contemporary data on the global economic operations of imperialism, as ultimately it is on this basis that all other forms of relationships develop.

The U.N. Center on Transnational Corporations reported that the parent transnational corporations (TNCs) have 100,000 affiliates in other countries, out of which one-third belong to the parent TNCs in the U.S. and one-fifth to those in the U.K. U.S. and U.K. TNCs account for over 60 percent of all foreign affiliates in the developing countries (7). Of the 10 largest TNCs in the world, 8 are US corporations which account for 76 percent of the group's total sales and 75 percent of its total profits (8). In 1985, the 10 largest U.S. industrial TNCs had sales of more than \$522.5 billion (9). A sample of the largest TNCs, in a U.N. study, showed that the ratio of sales by their foreign affiliates to total sales rose from about 30 percent in 1971 to about 35 percent in 1976 and to about 40 percent in 1980, indicating the rapid pace of the transnationalization of monopoly capital (10).

At the Tenth World Trade Union Congress in 1982, it was estimated that, by transfer of profits and other forms of plundering, international monopolies swindle the Third World countries of \$200 billion annually (11). Certainly this conservative estimate must have gone up considerably by this time.

For more than a decade now, the main form of the export of capital has been loan capital, which, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) data, made up 90 percent of the financial flow to the periphery in 1980 (12). In 1984, the debt of the periphery to the imperialist banks and corporations of the center reached the astronomical figure of \$833 billion, on which \$120 billion was extracted as debt service (13).

Transnational corporations from the center control 80 to 90 percent of the main commodities exported by the periphery and 40 percent of the industrial production in the latter (14). Fifteen largest among them, for example, controlled the marketing of 90 percent of the world's pineapples; 80 to 90 percent of the wheat, coffee, corn, cocoa, tea, forest products, cotton, tobacco, jute, copper, tin, bauxite; 90 to 95 percent of the iron ore; 75 percent of the crude petroleum; 60 percent of the sugar; 70 to 75 percent of the rice, bananas, and natural rubber; and 50 to 60 percent of the phosphates during 1980. In most cases, only 3 to 6 TNCs dominate bulk of the above-cited market (15). Although foreign direct investment and ownership is relatively lower in the agricultural economy than in mining, petroleum, and other industries of the periphery, the returns to the producers in the former sector, in terms of the proportion of the final product value, are much lower because of the TNC controls at the processing, transportation, and marketing levels (16). In one pioneering study, the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) revealed that, in the case of global banana trade, dominated by 3 large TNC's, 88 percent of the gains went to the TNC's while the producing countries got only 12 percent (17). It is estimated that the price manipulations by TNC's alone cause the Third World to lose between \$50 billion and \$100 billion annually (18).

The cumulative foreign direct investment (FDI) of TNC's at the end of 1983 was estimated to be around \$625 billion, of which TNC's based in the U.S. accounted for over 40 percent. About a quarter of the total FDI was in developing countries (19). During the 1960's and 1970's, U.S. TNC's accounted for more than half of the total flow of FDI, and in 1979 their share was 59 percent of the total (20). Another U.N. study revealed that between 1956 and 1968 the operations of U.S. TNCs were twice as profitable in the Third World as in the industrially developed countries (21). The share of income from FDI in the total income of 8 of the top 10 U.S. TNC's varied from 49 to 87 percent in 1979 (22).

In UNCTAD's statistics, it was shown that for every dollar invested in the Third World between 1970 and 1980, TNCs repatriated approximately \$2.20 to their home bases (23). U.S. TNCs invested \$12,450 million and repatriated \$48,847 million during 1970-1979, getting \$3.92 return for every dollar invested in the developing countries (24). In 1980, there was a disinvestment of \$3,454 million in the Middle East, and profits repatriated to the U.S. amounted to \$7,326 million (25), reducing the net flow of FDI by U.S. TNCs to the periphery to \$8,996 million and increasing the profits repatriated to the U.S. to \$56,173 million between 1970 and 1980, indicating that \$6.24 were repatriated as profits to the U.S. for every dollar invested in the Third World. Total income of U.S. TNCs between 1970 and 1980, from the above-mentioned net flow of \$8,996 million during the same period, amounted to \$78,934 million or a ratio of \$8.77 income for every

dollar invested in the periphery. During the same period, U.S. TNCs FDI net flow to developed capitalist countries was \$35,218 million, profits repatriated to the U.S. from them \$63,138 million and income \$134,818 million. Hence the ratios of repatriated dollars and total profits to dollars invested in the developed capitalist countries were 1.79:1 and 3.83:1, respectively, between 1970 and 1980, while, as noted above, these ratios were 6.24:1 and 8.77:1 in the case of developing countries. While 46.8 percent of the total profits made in the developed capitalist countries were repatriated to the U.S. and 53.2 percent were reinvested there, from the Third World 71 percent of the profits were remitted to the U.S. and 29 percent reinvested. Moreover, the profit rate on the U.S. cumulative FDI investments in the developed capitalist countries in 1980 was 16.6 percent, while the corresponding profit rate in the developing countries amounted to 24.1 percent. The total profits of U.S. TNCs from FDI in all areas abroad between 1970 and 1980 added up to the colossal sum of \$219,472 million. The total net inflow of FDI to these areas in the same period was \$44,928 million (26).

UNCTAD estimated that technological contributions by the skilled personnel who emigrated from the Third World to the U.S., Canada, and U.K. between 1960 and 1972 amounted to \$51 billion in terms of capital. The total amount of development assistance during the same period to the Third World was \$46 billion. Hence, brain drain alone caused a net loss of \$5 billion to the Third World in 12 years (27).

Such is the economic framework that has both been the result and the cause of numerous fascist superstructures in the periphery which constitute the overwhelming proportion of the data cited above for the periphery.

The above analysis of the second phase has shown that both bourgeois democracy and international fascism have been the essential attributes of U.S. monopoly capital in the post-Second World War period. The relevance of this relationship can hardly be overstated when applied to the developments and transformations in the present and future periods discussed in connection with the third and fourth phases.

The Third Phase

In the third phase of fascist molting, the initial processes of which started in the mid-1970s and the definitive shapes of which have been established in the 1980s, the imperialistically established fascist superstructures in the periphery are crumbling down rapidly, one after the other, like a house of cards, under the pressures of mass democratic movements. In this phase, the fascist pressures externalized so skillfully for so long onto the periphery are returning home to the imperialist center itself. This should be quite understandable, as once certain amounts of energy and pressures are generated and circulated in different channels of a system, any blockage in one of them would cause corresponding increases in the others to accommodate the total original volume, if a change in the system itself is not made. As indicated in the diagram, the third phase is a transitional phase which involves the present and immediate future periods and in which, as the fascist-type superstructures are breaking down in the periphery and being replaced by the democratic types, in the center the bourgeois democratic apparatus is being eroded, and there is a rapid upsurge of fascist and militarist tendencies on all levels of society, most importantly on the political level.

There are two diametrically opposed types of movement of forces and processes within the center inherent in the third phase:

- (1) Mass opposition and resistance to the transformation of bourgeois democracy into fascism in the center. Such an opposition will only succeed if it sets before itself the task of transforming the imperialist system itself. Otherwise it will be absurdly self-contradictory and ineffective. To be effective and successful, it will have to be organized under the leadership of the working class and will involve the revolutionary transformation of the imperialist system into a socialist democracy, eliminating the source of fascism once and for all.
- (2) Spontaneous movement of forces and processes, leading to ever-increasing erosion of bourgeois democracy, without the effective and consciously organized massive opposition mass movement in the center.

The Fourth Phase

The two alternative outcomes in the fourth phase would flow out of the two alternative developments of the movements described above and their conflict and outcome.

- (1) As a result of the first alternative of the third phase, socialist-oriented democracy is likely to result in the present imperialist center, which will have complementary democratic relationships with the periphery. As shown in the diagram, democracy will flow in both directions if this alternative is materialized.
- (2) If the second alternative of the third phase emerges victorious, fascism, in one form or another, is certain to be established in the imperialist center. It will be like the first phase, but with a different geographical nucleus, i.e. the U.S., and on an incomparably higher level of development and force. There will be renewed efforts for the establishment of universal fascism, even under the label of “democracy”. This would be truly the darkest age for mankind and would spell its end through nuclear holocaust.

Foundations of Fascism in the U.S

Within the U.S. imperialist center, various objective and subjective processes, described below, that are prerequisites for the upsurge and consolidation of fascism, have accumulated and matured to unprecedented levels. Although some of the same objective processes, in themselves, also constitute the maturity of conditions for transition into socialism, the incredibly regressive and distorted development of the subjective factor counteracts movement in that direction.

- (1) The highest degree and the most gigantic concentration of monopoly capital, under the control of relatively few large monopolies, in the world history.
- (2) The highest state of militarization of the economy in world history.

- (3) The most colossal buildup of material-technical military apparatus, constructed with the aid of the most advanced scientific and technological techniques in the world's history.
- (4) Unparalleled increase in the economic and political power of the military-industrial complex headed by the most bestial, reactionary, chauvinistic, imperialistic, and nuclear-weapons-intoxicated sections of monopoly capital.
- (5) A triple-layered economic crisis which U.S. imperialism is incapable of resolving within its present framework.
- (6) Sharp increase in the well-integrated and aggressive attacks of monopoly capital on the working class and labor unions.
- (7) An astounding lack of political unity, low political level of struggle, and predominance of class-collaborationist, opportunist, and pro-imperialist elements and sentiments in the working masses, which have made them extremely vulnerable to the attacks against them. Although a high degree of polarization of class forces is ensuing as a consequence of these brutal attacks, it is not clear whether it will develop rapidly enough and deeply enough to check the further advance of monopoly capital in the direction of fascism.
- (8) A general dehumanization, followed by monsterization of human nature, decadence, callousness, spiritual-emotional atrophy, and perversion of the mass psychology and personality structure in the population at large, primarily the result of being under the prolonged rule of the most intensified and sinister forms of capitalism in history, have all created a social environment in which extreme reactionary forces can and have risen to the top levels of political state power with an ease which only appears surprising if one has entertained delusions about social reality in the U.S. To be sure, such objective social reality is denied and covered up by a thin and superficial layer of solipsistic-mechanical forms of linguistic and other social behavior that are culturally produced and reproduced. However, objective facts constantly burst forth and explode the fragile and phony bubble of this secondary layer which, nevertheless, is again automatically inflated. There is an incessant contradiction and tension between the objective social reality on the one hand, and social subjective manipulation, rationalization, and denial of it on the other, producing a sort of social schizophrenic mental apparatus in this society.

Due to the existence of various objective and subjective circumstances, “the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital” have gained control of the political and state apparatus, albeit in a bourgeois democratic form. Whether they will need to or attempt to resort to the “open terrorist dictatorship” will largely depend upon the scale and strength of the opposition mass movement.

Summation

The staggering successes of national liberation movements in the periphery constitute the major causal factor in the chain of events leading to the all-out offensive of monopoly capital against the working class and the bourgeois democratic rights in its center. This could not be otherwise within the sinister system of imperialism. The main point here is that although the imperialist bourgeoisie has taken short-term measures to make up for the losses and has, in fact, increased its profits in face of the successes of national liberation movements in the periphery, it has no viable and reliable intermediate or long-term solutions to the problems thus being generated and is more and more resorting to naked militarism, irrationality, and rapidly increased levels of measures towards fascism.

At this point, it is possible to formulate the central thesis of this paper, which is that within the present U.S. imperialist politico-economic structure, an increase in the politico-economic independence and democracy in the periphery has a reducing effect on the existing version of bourgeois democracy in the center, and conversely the existence and expansion of fascist-type dictatorships in the periphery tend to maintain and enhance the specific version of bourgeois democracy under discussion in the center. On the other hand, the level and stability of bourgeois democracy in the center is dependent upon the continuation of fascist-type dictatorships, either direct or camouflaged through surrogates, in the periphery

The class nature and contradictions of democracy under capitalism have long been understood and analyzed by communists. Lenin, in his address to the First Congress of the Communist International in 1919, had presented a thorough analysis of the extremely limited and contradictory nature of bourgeois democracy in response to the class collaborationist, opportunist, and confusionist nonsense of the leadership of some European social democratic parties, in which they were attempting to identify bourgeois democracy with democracy in general. He conclusively demonstrated that bourgeois democracy was little more than a legal form of cover for the actual state of affairs characterized by the dictatorship of capitalists. He also pointed out that the “Marxists have always maintained that the more developed, the ‘purer’ democracy is, the more naked, acute, and merciless the class struggle becomes, and the ‘purer’ the capitalist oppression and bourgeois dictatorship” (28). These were prophetic words, the truth of which was never more self-evident, more applicable, than in the contemporary U.S. The inverse relationship between the progress of bourgeois democratic political super-structural form in the center and of any kind of democracy worth the name in the periphery, as discussed in this essay, is consistent with the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the problem of bourgeois democracy and follows from it under current international conditions. The dialectical logic also requires such an analysis of the interconnected movement, interactions, and mutual conditioning of the basic economic structures and political superstructures of the center and the periphery.

I will not attempt to deduce all the strategic and tactical implications of the analysis of this paper. However, one such implication is of fundamental importance: that under contemporary international conditions, the effective struggle against fascism requires a new strategy in which it is inseparably linked with the fight against the present structure of imperialism and the dependent nature of its bourgeois democracy in the center on

fascism in the periphery. This means that the mere struggle to preserve the present form of bourgeois democratic apparatus in the center, within its current imperialist context, would be futile and self-defeating. To be effective, the mass struggle against fascism would have to aim at the radical transformation of the current form of bourgeois democratic apparatus in the center as well as of the structure of international imperialism itself. This would only be possible under the leadership of the working class and its vanguard party. The bourgeoisie itself is completely bankrupt and incapable of providing such leadership at this stage. The theory and practice of united and popular front against fascism, developed during the first phase of fascism, will continue to be the basic guide at the new stage. However, the new features in the new phase of fascism also demand new measures and some modifications in the strategic objectives as well as in the strategy and tactics themselves. The highly contradictory and ambiguous role of progressive sections of the bourgeoisie became clear in their involvement in the popular front during the Spanish people's war against fascism, as well as during other revolutionary struggles throughout the world. Some of them, entrusted with leadership positions, caused immeasurable damage to the revolutionary movements. In the present-day imperialist centers, the bourgeoisie has decayed even further, and although its progressive sections will become part of the united and popular front against fascism, their capacity for leadership is extremely contradictory and limited. Another feature of the contemporary fight against fascism is the struggle against the danger of nuclear war, both problems being the organically linked, dominant forms that modern monopoly capital is passing through in its morbid historical development.

The immense and fundamental importance of the existence of socialist-block countries for the development of international events has not been discussed in this writing. However, this has been taken for granted as the foundation on which historical movement in the progressive directions has the possibility to advance at this phase.

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